

106TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. CON. RES. 294

Expressing the sense of the Congress that the Parthenon Marbles should
be returned to Greece.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 28, 2000

Mr. PAYNE submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the
Committee on International Relations

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of the Congress that the Parthenon
Marbles should be returned to Greece.

Whereas the Parthenon Marbles consist of over 100 decorative artifacts that were designed as components of the Parthenon, a temple to Athena, the Greek goddess of wisdom, in Athens, Greece;

Whereas the Parthenon marbles were removed from the Parthenon under questionable circumstances in 1801 while Greece was still under Ottoman rule;

Whereas the Parthenon is the ultimate creation of Greek artistic genius and is the preeminent symbol of Greek cultural heritage, including contributions to art, architecture, and governance;

Whereas selection of the Parthenon by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization as the symbol of world culture demonstrates that the Parthenon holds universal importance;

Whereas the Parthenon, as a universal symbol of culture and democracy, is of concern to not only Greece but all the world;

Whereas the purpose of removing the Parthenon Marbles was to grace the private home of Lord Elgin, who transferred the marbles to the British Museum only after severe personal economic misfortunes;

Whereas the removal of the Parthenon Marbles, including the perilous voyage to Great Britain and the careless storage of the marbles there for many years, greatly endangered the marbles;

Whereas since obtaining independence in the mid-19th Century, Greece has sought the return of the Parthenon Marbles;

Whereas even without considering the legal ramifications of the circumstances surrounding the removal of the Parthenon Marbles, the United Kingdom should return them in recognition that the Parthenon is part of the cultural heritage of the entire world and, as such, should be made whole;

Whereas Greece would provide care for the Parthenon Marbles equal or superior to the care provided by the British Museum, especially considering the irreparable harm caused by attempts by the museum to remove the original color and patina of the marbles with abrasive cleaners;

Whereas Greece is constructing a new, permanent museum in view of the Acropolis to house the Parthenon Marbles;

Whereas the people of the United Kingdom do not have an ancient bond to the Parthenon Marbles, given that the marbles have been in London for less than 200 years compared to the antiquity of the Parthenon of over 2,430 years, and as evidenced by a 1998 poll in which only 15 percent of the Britons polled recalled having seen the marbles in the British Museum;

Whereas the people of the United Kingdom support the return of the Parthenon Marbles by overwhelming numbers, as reflected in a 1998 poll;

Whereas the United States has imitated the architecture of the Parthenon in preeminent structures such as the Supreme Court and the Lincoln Memorial;

Whereas the United States Committee on the Parthenon was established to promote interest and scholarship in the Parthenon, and dedication to the physical unity and artistic integrity of the Parthenon;

Whereas Greece and various international committees have pledged to accommodate any conditions the United Kingdom may place on the return of the Parthenon Marbles, including any economic criteria and design specifications for the museum being constructed to house the marbles;

Whereas the return of the Parthenon Marbles would be the ultimate demonstration by the United Kingdom of appreciation and respect for the Parthenon and classical art; and

Whereas in 2004 the Olympics will return to Greece, where the Olympics began, and the Parthenon Marbles should be returned to their home in Athens by that time: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate*
2 *concurring)*, That the Congress urges the Government of
3 the United Kingdom to seek to enter into negotiations
4 with the Government of Greece as soon as possible to fa-
5 cilitate the return of the Parthenon Marbles to Greece be-
6 fore the Olympics in 2004.

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